

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07 LAB-04
NSAE-00 SIL-01 DODE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02
/040 W

-----210529Z 105927 /10

R 201248Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3533
INFO AMCONSUL BOMBAY
AMCONSUL CALCUTTA
AMCONSUL MADRAS
USCINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 7315

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: ELAB, IN
SUBJ: BOMBAY PORT STRIKE

REF: NEW DELHI 7117

1. BOMBAY PORT STRIKE REPORTED REFTEL ENTERED ITS
10TH DAY MAY 20 WITH ADDITIONAL PORT TRUST EMPLOYEES
JOINING THE WORK STOPPAGE. ON MAY 17 THE INDIAN NAVY
INTERVENED TO ENSURE THE MOVEMENT OF OIL TANKERS,
PASSENGER SHIPS AND VESSELS WITH DEFENSE CARGO. THE NAVY
IS EXPECTED TO CONTINUE THIS ROLE FOR THE DURATION OF
THE STRIKE, BUT AT PRESENT THERE ARE APPARENTLY NO PLANS
FOR THE NAVY TO MOVE OTHER VESSELS. OFFICIALS FOR THE
PORT TRUST STATED THAT THE INTEVENTION OF THE NAVY
WAS SOUGHT WHEN THE PORT TRUST EMPLOYEES' UNION RENEGED
ON ITS ASSURANCE THAT OIL TANKERS WOULD BE EXEMPT
FROM THE WORK STOPPAGE. THE TWO OIL REFINERIES IN
BOMBAY REPORTEDLY WERE CLOSE TO THE CRITICAL DEPLETION
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POINT IN THEIR SUPPLY OF CRUDE. AS OF COB MAY 19, 33
SHIPS REPORTEDLY WERE ANCHORED IN MID STREAM AWAITING
BERTHING SPACE.

2. THE USE OF THE NAVY IN THE BOMBAY PORT HAS BEEN
ATTACKED BY A NUMBER OF UNION AND POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS.
THE PRESIDENT OF THE ALL-INDIA PORT AND DOCK WORKERS

FEDERATION, S. R. KULKARNI, WHOSE BOMBAY UNION REPRESENTS THE LONGSHOREMEN NOT ON STRIKE, DEMANDED THE IMMEDIATE WITHDRAWAL OF THE NAVY. HE WARNED THAT THE USE OF ARMED FORCES PERSONNEL TO BREAK STRIKES MIGHT "DISTURB THE INDUSTRIAL HARMONY IN ALL MAJOR PORTS OF THE COUNTRY." COMMENT: KULKARNI IS A RIVAL OF DR. SHANTI PATEL, LEADER OF THE STRIKING WORKERS. IN PART, THE MILITANCY OF KULKARNI'S STATEMENT IS EXPLAINABLE BY HIS COMPETITION WITH PATEL FOR LEADERSHIP OF THE BOMBAY PORT.

3. COMMENT: THE BOMBAY PORT STRIKE PRESENTS A REAL DILEMMA FOR THE JANATA GOVERNMENT. THE STRIKERS ARE DEMANDING WITHDRAWAL OF CHANGES MADE IN THE WORK RULES DURING THE EMERGENCY, SUCH AS CURTAILMENT OF OVERTIME, INCREASES IN WORKLOADS, AND REDUCTION OF THE WORK FORCE BY A FAILURE TO FILL VACANCIES. THESE CHANGES WERE UNDOUBTEDLY JUSTIFIED IN TERMS OF IMPROVING PORT EFFICIENCY AND REDUCING COSTS. THE GOI IS NOW FORCED TO CHOOSE BETWEEN SUCH OBJECTIVES AND ITS POLITICAL INTERESTS. SHANTI PATEL, A FORMER MAYOR OF BOMBAY CITY, IS A CLOSE ASSOCIATE OF JANATA PARTY LEADER ASHOKA MEHTA AND IS WELL KNOWN IN HIS OWN RIGHT FOR HIS OPPOSITION TO MRS GANDHI AND THE EMERGENCY. SCHNEIDER

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Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 20-May-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
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Executive Order: GS
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Handling Restrictions: n/a
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